

## *AMERICANese*

Opening Night at 11th Annual Chicago Asian-American Showcase

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006 – Gene Siskel Film Center

Indie Sets New Benchmark for Asian American Film Movement

Director Eric Byler & Novelist Shawn Wong

to Appear at Chicago Area Universities

Eric Byler's *AMERICANese* kicks off the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Asian-American Showcase on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006 at the Gene Siskel Film Center (164 N. State Street). Based on Shawn Wong's controversial novel *American Knees*, *AMERICANese* world premiered earlier this month at the 2006 South by Southwest festival where it won 2 Awards – the **Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature** and the **Jury Award for Outstanding Ensemble Acting**.

*AMERICANese* centers on two former lovers in search of paths to healing. As each begins new relationships, dreams and memories lead them back to the time to the moment their hearts let go. "The film is an epilogue to a love story," said Byler, "a love story that begins with a goodbye."

Erik Childress of Efilmcritic.com raved: "Eric Byler is the real deal. ...Grand sweeping statements about love and loss are sidestepped in favor of capturing the mood, both exterior and interior, the way Yasujiro Ozu might have. Byler molds the silence into the fray and enlightens every sentence with an authenticity that's

all too rare.”

The Award-winning cast includes Academy-Award® Winner, CHRIS TASHIMA (*Visas And Virtue*); JOAN CHEN (*The Last Emperor, Saving Face*); KELLY HU (*X-Men II, The Scorpion King*); ALLISON SIE (*Enemy Of State, Anywhere But Here*); Emmy and Golden Globe nominated BEN SHENKMAN (*Must Love Dogs, Angels In America*); SAB SHIMONO (*Robot Stories, Come See The Paradise*); and MICHAEL PAUL CHAN (*Joy Luck Club, The Insider, Thousand Pieces of Gold*). Producer LISA ONODERA (*Picture Bride, The Debut*) has championed the project since its inception.

Byler's first feature, *Charlotte Sometimes*, was lauded by film critic Roger Ebert as "a relationship picture that plays like an emotional thriller" and "a breakthrough for Asian American filmmakers." The film won several film festival awards and was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards, the John Cassavetes Award and Best Supporting Actress for Jacqueline Kim.

In conjunction with the Opening Night presentation, Shawn Wong and Eric Byler have been invited to speak on the film and on Asian American media representations at three Chicago area universities.

March 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm Univ. of Illinois at Chicago (Wong and Byler),  
<http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/AARCC/>

March 30<sup>th</sup> - 3:30pm at Northwestern Univ. (Wong and Byler),

March 30<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 pm at De Paul Univ. (Wong and novelist Frank Chin),  
<http://www.naaapchicago.org/News.do?id=1006>

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